
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Executive Order 15 (2002)

GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COMMISSION FOR VETERANS' AFFAIRS

By virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor under Article V of the Constitution of Virginia and under the laws of the Commonwealth, including but not limited to, Chapter 1 of Title 2.2 and Section 2.2-2100 of the *Code of Virginia*, and subject to my continuing and ultimate authority and responsibility to act in such matters, I hereby establish the Governor's Advisory Commission for Veteran's Affairs.

Importance of Veterans' Affairs

We are blessed to live in the greatest country in the world with many personal freedoms and much opportunity and promise. These premier benefits have not come easily or freely. Our armed forces have fervently and gallantly protected our nation's principles and freedoms throughout our history. Their service to our country – past and present – underscores dramatically the fact that freedom needs dedicated men and women to defend it and to sustain it.

Virginia has a strong and abiding relationship with the nation's military. Every service branch has a significant presence in the Commonwealth and, of course, Virginia is home to the Pentagon. Many of the active duty personnel who come to Virginia fall in love with our magnificent commonwealth and decide to call it home. As a result, Virginia has a substantial veteran population that richly contributes to our quality of life.

The Commonwealth has many agencies and programs that serve the veteran community, including:

- Benefit services and veterans cemeteries through the Virginia Department of Veterans' Affairs,
- Job opportunity programs at the Department of Human Resource Management,
- Nursing home and assisted living services at the Virginia Veterans Care Center in Roanoke, and
- The Virginia War Memorial Foundation in Richmond.

The Commonwealth is in the process of expanding these services. A second veterans cemetery will break ground this fall in Suffolk. Virginia has also committed to build a second Veterans Care Center next to the McGuire VA Hospital in Richmond. The General Assembly approved Virginia's share of the construction funds and I recently signed the legislation into law. We are awaiting final approval of the federal matching funds for the second center.

The Governor's Advisory Commission

Virginia's veteran population is growing and its needs are changing. As the Commonwealth expands its veteran services, we must prepare for and adapt to these changing community conditions. Therefore, I hereby create the Governor's Advisory Commission for Veterans' Affairs (hereinafter referred to as "the Commission"), which shall formulate recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of Virginia's veteran programs within available resources for both current and future needs. The Commission shall be classified as a gubernatorial advisory board in accordance with Section 2.2-2100 of the *Code of Virginia*.

The Commission shall have the following responsibilities:

- Review the agencies, programs, and boards currently serving the veteran community in the Commonwealth, including various fundraising activities.
- Assess the current and future projected needs of Virginia's veteran community.
- Identify current and potential future funding sources for veteran services.
- Recommend the structure, strategies, and systems for the most effective delivery of services to Virginia's veteran community.

The Commission shall present its report to the Governor no later than November 1, 2002.

The Commission shall be appointed by the Governor and serve at his pleasure. The Governor shall designate a chairman of the Commission. Members of the Commission shall serve without compensation, but they may receive reimbursement for expenses incurred in the discharge of their official duties upon approval of the Chief of Staff.

Staff support necessary for the work of the Commission shall be provided by the Office of the Secretary of Administration and such executive branch agencies as the Governor may designate. An estimated 800 hours of staff time shall be needed to support the work of the Commission.

Funding necessary to support the Commissioner's and its staff shall be provided from federal funds, private contributions, and state funds appropriated for the same purposes as the Commission, as authorized by Section 2.2-135 of the Code of Virginia. Direct expenditures to support the Commission's work are estimated at \$7,000.

This Executive Order shall be effective immediately upon its signing and shall remain in full force and effect until June 24, 2003, unless amended or rescinded by further Executive Order.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia, this 24th day of June 2002.

Mark R. Warner, Governor

Attest:

Secretary of the Commonwealth